



NEWS RELEASE

PRESS OFFICE

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SBA UNVEILS NEW WEB SITE, OFFICE TO HELP WOMEN BUSINESS OWNERS GET FEDERAL CONTRACTS

WASHINGTON – A new Web site launched by the U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA) will increase procurement and networking opportunities to women-owned businesses by placing all contracting assistance information at a single on-line site, SBA Administrator Aida Alvarez announced today at the White House.

The new Web site – WomenBiz.gov – is a joint project of SBA's new Office of Federal Contract Assistance for Women Business Owners, SBA's Office of Women's Business Ownership, the Interagency Committee for Women's Business Enterprise and the National Women's Business Council.

WomenBiz.gov will provide women-owned businesses with direct access to the federal acquisition tools and government networks to tap into the \$200 billion federal marketplace. The site will serve as the official gateway to more than 100 procurement and acquisition sites hosted by various Federal agencies.

It also includes links to PRO-Net, Electronic Posting System, CBDNet, the GSA Federal Supply Schedule Program, DefenseLINK, and SBA's Government Contracting page.

"The President has called on the SBA to pave the way to ensure that women-owned businesses receive their fair share of federal contracts," said Administrator Alvarez. **"I believe we are answering that call and reaffirming our commitment to the Administration's initiative by endorsing the launch of this Web site and creating this office. These are two important vehicles for providing women-owned businesses with procurement opportunities."**

The Web site has information pages especially developed to assist women business owners who want to participate in government procurement. Some topics that are highlighted on the Web site are the following:

- **Getting Started:** Register your company as a contractor or vendor with PRO-Net, Central Contractor Registration (CCR) and the Electronic Posting System (EPS).
- **Subcontracting:** Exclusive to WomenBiz.gov – the most comprehensive resource for subcontracting opportunities. Locate prime contractors for business opportunities and find other small businesses to team with for large contracts.
- **Forecasts:** If a Federal department or agency prepares a procurement forecast, you will find it here!

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- **Best Practices:** WomenBiz.gov also congratulates departments and agencies that meet or exceed the 5 percent goal by featuring their women-owned business outreach initiative.
- **Mentor-Protégé Programs:** WomenBiz.gov is the only site that brings together government mentor-protégé programs as one source of information.
- **Acquisition News and Calendar of Events:** A source of information on procurement conferences and seminars hosted by government departments and agencies as well as a monthly column provided by government officials about how to do business with their department or agency.

The new women's contracting office is one of many initiatives the White House has implemented to increase procurement opportunities for women-owned businesses. President Clinton required in Executive Order 13157 that all federal agencies "meet or exceed" the five percent government contracting goal that now exists for women-owned businesses. President Clinton specifically called on the SBA to establish an office that will assist women business owners and provide them with:

- more extensive training and technical assistance;
- a single Web site with detailed procurement information; and
- an interactive electronic commerce database containing information on women-owned businesses.

Effective October 1, 2000, Sheryl J. Swed will become the assistant administrator for the Office of Federal Contract Assistance for Women Business Owners in the Office of Government Contracting. Ms. Swed brings over 25 years of public service related to small business, international trade and women's issues to this important new position.

During today's White House event, SBA also presented the first ever *Dietra L. Ford Award of Excellence* to the Department of State in recognition of its exemplary performance in meeting aggressive contracting goals and developing strategic initiatives for women-owned businesses. The White House endorsed this award in memory of Dietra L. Ford, former director of the Office of Small and Disadvantaged Business Utilization at the General Services Administration, for her outstanding contributions to women-owned businesses.

"I am honored to present this award to the State Department in memory of my esteemed colleague, whose commitment to women businesses was unyielding throughout her career," said Administrator Alvarez.

Administrator Alvarez will present the award today at 4:00 p.m. The award will be presented during SBA's Annual Procurement Conference in future years.

For more information on government contracting for women business owners, visit the Web site at <http://www.womenbiz.gov>. Additional information about SBA's programs and services is available at SBA's Web site: <http://www.sba.gov> or by calling the SBA's Answer Desk at 1-800 U ASK SBA.

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